

**Question for written answer E-001098/2019
to the Commission**

Rule 130

Marina Albiol Guzmán (GUE/NGL)

Subject: Zinc and lead mining project in Cantabria

Zinc and lead mining in Cantabria ended in 2003 with the closure of the Reocín mine. Now there are private-sector plans to resume mining these metals, and the Government of the Autonomous Community of Cantabria has granted exploration licences, including to Cantábrica del Zinc SL, part of a joint venture with Global Amidala SL and the Canadian mining corporation Emerita Resources, for the 'Salía' exploratory project.

The project will affect the municipalities of Suances, Torrelavega, Santillana del Mar, Reocín, Cartes and Mazcuerras. The Autonomous Community of Cantabria does not have a programme for exploratory mining and – in breach of Directive 2011/92/UE – the project has not been subjected to an environmental impact assessment. On 15 May 2017, following the ratification of the Canada-EU Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA), spatial planning law No 2/2001 was amended to facilitate projects of this type.

The area where the prospecting will take place includes some 15 habitats of Community interest, which have to be protected under Directives 92/43/EEC and 2009/147/EC. The project would also be in breach of the precautionary principle enshrined in Article 191 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

- (1) Is the Commission aware of this project and of the fact that no environmental impact assessment has been carried out?
- (2) Will it open a dialogue with the authorities responsible about the infringements of EU law?
- (3) What steps will it take if this project goes ahead?